

A BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR OF THE REV. JOHN HENRY KEEN

By MELVILLE H. HATCH

Students of the beetles of British Columbia are familiar with a short series of papers on the beetles occurring in the vicinity of Massett on the Queen Charlotte Islands and about Metakatka on the neighboring mainland by the Rev. J. H. Keen. Others in addition to myself have undoubtedly discovered that there is a complete dearth of published information about the Rev. Keen. Accordingly, the following biographical notes, which I owe to the kindness of a number of correspondents, will be especially acceptable.

John Henry Keen was born in England in 1851 or early in 1852. He was educated at the Church Missionary Society College in Islington in London, where he graduated in 1873. Two years later he was made a Deacon by the Bishop of London for the Colonies and left for Canada where he spent seven years as the Church Missionary Society missionary at Moose Fort, Ontario, in the Anglican Diocese of Moosonee, which then embraced a strip of land running up the eastern and western shores of Hudson Bay indefinitely to the north. Here Keen was ordained a priest by the Bishop of Moosonee in 1877. In 1882 he returned to England where he served as Curate of Spitalfields, near London, until 1889, and in the Church of St. John Evangelist in Islington (London) in 1889-1890.

In May 1890, the Rev. Keen arrived at Massett, British Columbia, on the north shore of Graham Island in the Queen Charlotte Archipelago, in the Diocese of Caledonia, where he served as missionary to the Haida Indians from 1890 to 1898. Here he made himself familiar with the Haida language, so that he translated into Haida the Gospels of St. Luke, St. John, and Acts in 1898 and the Prayer Book in 1899, and mimeographed "A Grammar of the Haida Language," which was published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in London in 1906.

Keen's eight years at Massett was the period of his most important entomological work. It is not known what his previous experience with insects had been, but the tradition of entomology as an avocation for English clergymen was well established. Such eminent British entomologists as William Kirby and W. W. Fowler, the latter the author of the then appearing *Coleoptera of the British Isles* (5 vol., 1888-1891), were clergymen, as was G. W. Taylor, at that time the leading entomologist in British Columbia.

Keen's first entomological paper was a list of *Some British Columbia Coleoptera* published in the *Canadian Entomologist* for December 1891 (vol. 23, p. 282). In July and August 1890 Keen had been at Inverness, an Indian village a little southeast of Prince Rupert, probably on Church business, and had collected a few beetles that he sent in to the British Museum at South Kensington. Forty-six species were listed, ten of them, however, identified only to genus.

With this as a start, Keen set to work on the beetles of the Massett area and, during the years 1891 to 1894 made a considerable collection. He got into touch with Mr. James Fletcher of Ottawa, Dominion Entomologist and the leading student of insects in Canada. To help with the identification of Keen's specimens, Mr. Fletcher enlisted the aid of Dr. John Hamilton of Allegheny, Pa., Dr. C. V. Riley and L. O. Howard of Washington, D. C.; Dr. George H. Horn of Philadelphia; Capt. T. L. Casey of New York City; Prof. H. F. Wickham of Iowa City, and Mons. A. Fauvel of Caen, France. Keen contributed the numerous Queen Charlotte Islands records for Hamilton's *Catalogue of the Coleoptera of Alaska* published in 1894

(Trans. Amer. Ent. Soc. 21, 1894, pp. 1-38), many of which represented the first published mention of the species for British Columbia. In the *Canadian Entomologist* for July and August 1895 (vol. 27, pp. 165-172, 217-220) he published a *List of Copeoptera Collected at Massett, Queen Charlotte Island, B. C.* This is a catalogue of some 241 species, frequently accompanied by habitat data, and contains the names of many species being recorded from British Columbia for the first time.

Keen's next paper was entitled *Three Interesting Staphylinidae from Queen Charlotte Islands*, published in the *Canadian Entomologist* for December 1897 (vol. 29, pp. 285-287). It is most noteworthy for its remarks on a beetle that Fauvel had suggested be called *Haida keeni*, named for the Indians with whom Keen was working and for Keen himself. Fauvel himself, however, had never gotten around to describe the species in print, so that Keen's interesting but taxonomically most inadequate remarks constitute the original description of both genus and species, and resulted in Keen being in the anomalous position of naming a species after himself! The species was not formally described until W. J. Brown did so in 1944 (Can. Ent. 76, pp. 5-6), but Keen remains its author. The same article by Keen contains an early notice of the intertidal habits of *Liparocephalus*.

Meanwhile, Keen was distributing his specimens in various directions. The collections of most of the men mentioned in a previous paragraph came to contain Queen Charlotte Island material. I have seen examples in the Canadian National Collection at Ottawa. Many of Casey's descriptions were based on Keen's material. *A Preliminary Catalogue of the Collections of Natural History and Ethnology in the Provincial Museum, Victoria, British Columbia*, published in 1898, lists (pp. 71-74) 141 species presented to the Museum by Keen. Moreover, in the same publication John Fannin acknowledges (p. 13) Keen's assistance in the preparation of "The Check List of British Columbia Birds," and an errata slip records his presentation of a specimen of an undescribed species of weasel.

Keen's services at Massett ended in 1898, when he received a year's furlough. At the end of the furlough, he was sent to Metlakatla, an Indian village a few miles northwest of Prince Rupert across the inlet, and here he served for fourteen years. His entomological interests continued, and 1905 saw the publication of a list of 50 species of *Beetles from Northern British Columbia* in the *Canadian Entomologist* (vol. 37, pp. 297-298), based on specimens named for him by Fletcher and Wickham. Keen left Metlakatka for England on July 17, 1913¹ "on furlough with a view to resignation."

In England after doing Christian Missionary Society deputation work for about a year, Keen became Curate at Trowbridge in Wiltshire. Thereafter the record falters. Presumably he retired from active service in the 1920's. He is noted as writing a history of the Diocese of Caledonia, where he served so long in British Columbia, in 1932. The British coleopterist, Roy A. Crowson of the University of Glasgow, writes me of having known Reverend Keen well during his last days in retirement at Tunbridge Wells, at which time he apparently still maintained an interest in insects, and finally, the copy of Keen's history of the Diocese of Caledonia in Bishop Watts'

¹Easton, Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus. 104, 1955, p. 100 states that "The British Museum possess a single example (of *Meligethes nigrescens* Stephens) from Metlakatla, British Columbia (J. H. Keen, 1915)." Either this date is in error, or Keen served two years longer in Metlakatla than the records in Prince Rupert indicate.

possession at Prince Rupert bears the notation: "Died at Tunbridge Wells, England, on April 3, 1950, at the age of 98 in full command of his faculties." A long life had come to a close.

For assistance in the preparation of the foregoing account I am indebted to Mr. G. Stace Smith of Creston, B. C.; to the Rev. John C. Goodfellow, to Mrs. P. F. P. Bird, Eileen M. James, and above all, to The Right Rev. H. G. Watts, Bishop of Caledonia, all of Prince Rupert, British Columbia.

DEATH NOTICE

It is with deep regret that we announce the death of M. Y. MARSHALL, M.D., on August 28, 1957. Dr. Marshall was well known for his work on the Malachiidae. His collection of 35,000 specimens has been willed to the University of Michigan.

R. H. ARNETT, JR.